

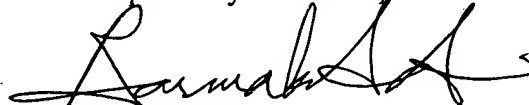
namely, the step of annealing the trench so that trench corners at the open and closed ends of the trench become rounded, was reduced to practice prior to the June 29, 1998 filing date of Sato et al.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, Applicants believe all claims now pending in this Application are in condition for allowance. The issuance of a formal Notice of Allowance at an early date is respectfully requested.

If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this application, please telephone the undersigned at 650-326-2400.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Barmak Sani', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Barmak Sani
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Enclosure
- § 131 Declaration